

RiverCulture Steering Committee
March 2, 2021 6pm via ZOOM
Meeting was recorded
MINUTES

Members: Rachel Teumim, Lilith Wolinsky, Eileen Dowd (Chair), Kristi Bodin, Tammy Ketcham
Town: Suzanne LoManto

6:02pm: Chair opens meeting.

MOTION by ED to approve the meeting minutes of October, 14, 2020. Seconded by TK. VOTE: Rachel Teumim (AYE), Lilith Wolinsky (AYE), Eileen Dowd (AYE), Kristi Bodin (AYE), Tammy Ketcham (AYE), MOTION passes.

6:03pm: RiverCulture FY21 Finance Review

Director talks about the current financial state of RiverCulture including how the money can/ must be spent from different town accounts (fiscal agency, grants, contract sponsors, RiverCulture general funds, and MCC Cultural District funds) Director discusses how she would like to spend about \$18,000 before June including the signage incentive program, entertainment, the Millers Falls trail extension and beautification. Director talks about carryover funds into FY2022 including business sponsors. Additionally, the Director started a conversation about how cannabis funding might change or direct the RiverCulture program and/or structure.

6:15pm:

Millers Falls **MIFA Trail Extension** on Newton Street Project: Funding: \$2,000

Director discusses community energy in the Millers Falls around two Newton Streets projects, the Douglass Smith mural and the River trail completed last year by the Planning Department. Director expresses her desire to spend \$2000 from the general account to fund a trail extension on the opposite side of Newton Street. (map shown) These funds would be added to a \$1000 donation. MFCIA member Tammy Ketcham discusses the evolution of the site and its mural. MFCIA discovered an economical/ecological way to harden about 800 feet of trail. MIFA is working with the Planning Department who will help the group get approval from the Conservation Commission and the Steering Committee. The trail extension could be completed by late spring. Tammy Ketcham recuses.

MOTION by KB to approve \$2000 for the Millers Falls trail extension. Seconded by LW. VOTE: Rachel Teumim (AYE), Lilith Wolinsky (AYE), Eileen Dowd (AYE), Kristi Bodin (AYE) MOTION passes.

UPDATE: Turners Falls Cultural District **Signage Program** was approved by the Cultural District stakeholders in the February survey. The program has been popular with business owners.

UPDATE Implementation **Resurgent Places Grant**. The mural will be finished and installed in upcoming weeks. RiverCulture will spend the rest of the grant on lighting, chairs and possibly shade near the building for outdoor gatherings.

UPDATE: Town Planner Walter Ramsey and the RiverCulture Director have a webinar with the **Rapid Recovery Planning Grant** consultant on 3/8 to discuss gathering Cultural District stakeholders around

the topics of 1.) the fragmentation of partnerships due to COVID and 2.) placemaking/ public art priorities in the Cultural District.

UPDATE: **Spinner Park Construction** will begin as soon as possible. Completion date is late May/June. A celebration is in order.

The Director sent a **Downtown Survey** to Cultural District stakeholders in late January. Their responses informed the application of \$7500 from the MCC. Seen favorably by stakeholders were expenses related to 1.) Outdoor entertainment this summer, 2.) Rebuilding the RiverCulture website with a highly performing business directory, and 3.) Funding for the signage incentive program. The grant was received.

Director spoke about the concept of the **Peskeomskut Audio Walking Tour**, a project brought to her by a group of participants from the Battlefield Grant Project. The group is comprised of a highly expert group of historians and Indigenous leaders. On behalf of the group, the Director would like to apply for an MCC grant to fund Phase I of the project (writing) and needs a Committee vote on the \$2500 match.

Director spoke on the importance of a **Spring Clean-Up + Gardening** this year as a way to boost business. Four new benches will be put on Avenue A and \$1700 from the Town will be made available for planter improvements. The Director would like to add \$1000 on planter improvements in addition to sponsoring a direct business-appeal.

MOTION by LW to Approve the RiverCulture Budget for the remainder of FY21 including funding for the Peskeomskut Audio Walking Tour and the planter fund. Seconded by KB. VOTE Rachel Teumim (AYE), Lilith Wolinsky (AYE), Eileen Dowd (AYE), Kristi Bodin (AYE), Tammy Ketcham (AYE), MOTION passes.

Eileen Dowd spoke on the monumental nature of the “Spinner” unveiling when the park is completed in May/June 2021. She would like to see a parade, involving the folks involved in the park reconstruction and sculpture rehabilitation, in addition to other entertainment. There was support from the Steering Committee for a celebration.

MOTION TO ADJURN. 6:58pm